

REMARKS

Please reconsider the application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks. Applicant thanks the Examiner for indicating that claims 8 and 9 contain allowable subject matter.

Disposition of Claims

Claims 1-6, 8-17, 19-21, 23, 24, 27, 29-35, 37, and 39 are currently pending in this application. Claims 1 and 4 have been canceled by this reply. Claim 8 has been amended to be rewritten in independent form. Thus, of the remaining claims, claims 8, 15, 17, and 23 are independent. The remaining claims depend, directly or indirectly, from claims 8, 15, 17, and 23.

Allowable Subject Matter & Claim Amendments

The Examiner indicated in the Office Action mailed on April 5, 1006, that claims 8 and 9 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Thus, claim 8 has been amended by this reply to be rewritten in independent form, including the limitations of claims 1 and 4. Thus, claim 8 is now allowable. Claim 9, which depends from claim 8, is also allowable.

Independent claims 15, 17, and 23 have been amended to include the limitations of dependent claims 4 and 8. Thus, independent claims 15, 17, and 23 now contain allowable subject matter. Dependent claims 2, 3, 5, 6, 10, 12, 13, 14, and 20 have been amended to dependent from independent claim 8. Applicant asserts that no new subject matter is added by way of these amendments, as support for these amendments can be found in the original claims. Further, because the amendments made only incorporate limitations from existing independent and dependent claims, Applicant asserts that no new search or consideration is required by the amendments made to claims 8, 15, 17, and 23.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1, 4, 5, 10-13, 20, and 21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,870,155 (“Erlin”) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,317,721 (“Hurta”) and U.S. Patent No. 5,473,609 (“Chaney”). Claims 1 and 4 have been canceled by this reply. Thus, this rejection is now moot with respect to claims 1 and 4. To the extent that the rejection may still apply to the amended claims, this rejection is respectfully traversed.

As described above, dependent claims 5, 10-13, 20 and 21 depend from now allowable independent claim 8. Thus, claims 5, 10-13, 20 and 21 are patentable over Erlin, Hurta, and Chaney, whether considered separately or in combination, for at least the same reasons as allowable independent claim 8. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claim 14 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Erlin in view of Hurta and Chaney and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,231,494 (“Washob”). To the extent that this rejection may still apply to the amended claims, this rejection is respectfully traversed.

As described above, dependent claim 14 has been amended to depend from now allowable independent claim 8. Thus, claim 14 is patentable over Erlin, Hurta, Chaney, and Washob, whether considered separately or in combination, for at least the same reasons as allowable independent claim 8. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 17 and 19 of the present application were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Erlin in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,351,296 issued to Sullivan

(hereinafter “Sullivan”). To the extent that this rejection may still apply to the amended claims, this rejection is respectfully traversed.

As described above, independent claim 17 has been amended to include the subject matter of original dependent claims 4 and 8. Thus, claim 17 now contains allowable subject matter and is patentable over Erlin and Sullivan, whether considered separately or in combination, for at least the same reasons as allowable independent claim 8. Dependent claim 19 is patentable for at least the same reasons. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 2, 3, and 15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Erlin in view of Chaney and Hurta in further view of U.S. Patent No. 5,491,827 issued to Holtey (hereinafter “Holtey”). To the extent that this rejection may still apply to the amended claims, this rejection is respectfully traversed.

As described above, independent claim 15 has been amended to include the subject matter of original dependent claims 4 and 8. Thus, claim 15 now contains allowable subject matter and is patentable over Erlin, Chaney, Hurta, and Holtey, whether considered separately or in combination, for at least the same reasons as allowable independent claim 8. Dependent claims 2 and 3, which have been amended to depend from allowable claim 8, are patentable for at least the same reasons. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claim 16 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Erlin in view of Chaney and Hurta, and further in view of Holtey and Wachob. To the extent that this rejection may still apply to the amended claims, this rejection is respectfully traversed.

As described above, independent claim 15 has been amended to include the subject matter of original dependent claims 4 and 8. Thus, claim 15 now contains allowable subject matter and is patentable over Erlin, Chaney, Hurta, Holtey and Wachob, whether considered separately or in combination, for at least the same reasons as allowable independent claim 8. Dependent claim 16 is patentable over Erlin, Chaney, Hurta, Holtey and Wachob for at least the same reasons. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claim 6 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Erlin in view of Chaney and U.S. Patent No. 5,603,078 issued to Henderson (hereinafter "Henderson"). To the extent that this rejection may still apply to the amended claims, this rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 6 has been amended to depend from now allowable independent claim 8. Thus, claim 6 is patentable over Erlin and Henderson for at least the same reasons as independent claim 8. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 23, 29-32, 33-35, 37, and 39 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Erlin in view of Chaney and U.S. Patent No. 5,602,581 issued to Ozaki (hereinafter "Ozaki"). To the extent that this rejection may still apply to the amended claims, this rejection is respectfully traversed.

Independent claim 23 has been amended to include the allowable subject matter of original dependent claim 8. Thus, claim 23 is now patentable over Erlin, Chaney, and Ozaki, whether considered separately or in combination, for at least the same reasons as independent claim 8. Dependent claims 29-32, 33-35, 37, and 39 are patentable for at least the same reasons. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 30-31 and 35 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Erlin in view of Chaney and Ozaki in further view of U.S. Patent No. 5, 539,824 (“Bjorklund”). To the extent that this rejection may still apply to the amended claims, this rejection is respectfully traversed.

Independent claim 23 has been amended to include the allowable subject matter of original dependent claim 8. Thus, claim 23 is now patentable over Erlin, Chaney, Ozaki, and Bjorklund whether considered separately or in combination, for at least the same reasons as independent claim 8. Dependent claims 30, 31, and 35 are patentable for at least the same reasons. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claim 34 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Erlin in view of Chaney and Ozaki in further view of U.S. Patent No. 4,849,613 (“Eisele”). To the extent that this rejection may still apply to the amended claims, this rejection is respectfully traversed.

Independent claim 23 has been amended to include the allowable subject matter of original dependent claim 8. Thus, claim 23 is now patentable over Erlin, Chaney, Ozaki, and Eisele whether considered separately or in combination, for at least the same reasons as independent claim 8. Dependent claim 34 is patentable for at least the same reasons. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claim 27 of the present application was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Erlin in view of Chaney and Ozaki in further view of U.S. Patent No. 5,787,154 issued to Hazra (hereinafter “Hazra”). To the extent that this rejection may still apply to the amended claims, this rejection is respectfully requested.


Independent claim 23 has been amended to include the allowable subject matter of original dependent claim 8. Thus, claim 23 is now patentable over Erlin, Chaney, Ozaki, and Hazra, whether considered separately or in combination, for at least the same reasons as independent claim 8. Dependent claim 27 is patentable for at least the same reasons. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

Applicant believes this reply is fully responsive to all outstanding issues and places this application in condition for allowance. If this belief is incorrect, or other issues arise, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned or his associates at the telephone number listed below. Please apply any charges not covered, or any credits, to Deposit Account 50-0591 (Reference Number 11345/102001).

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Respectfully submitted,

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